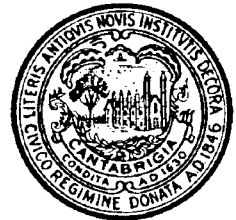
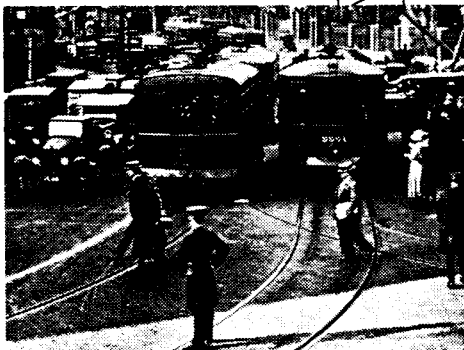
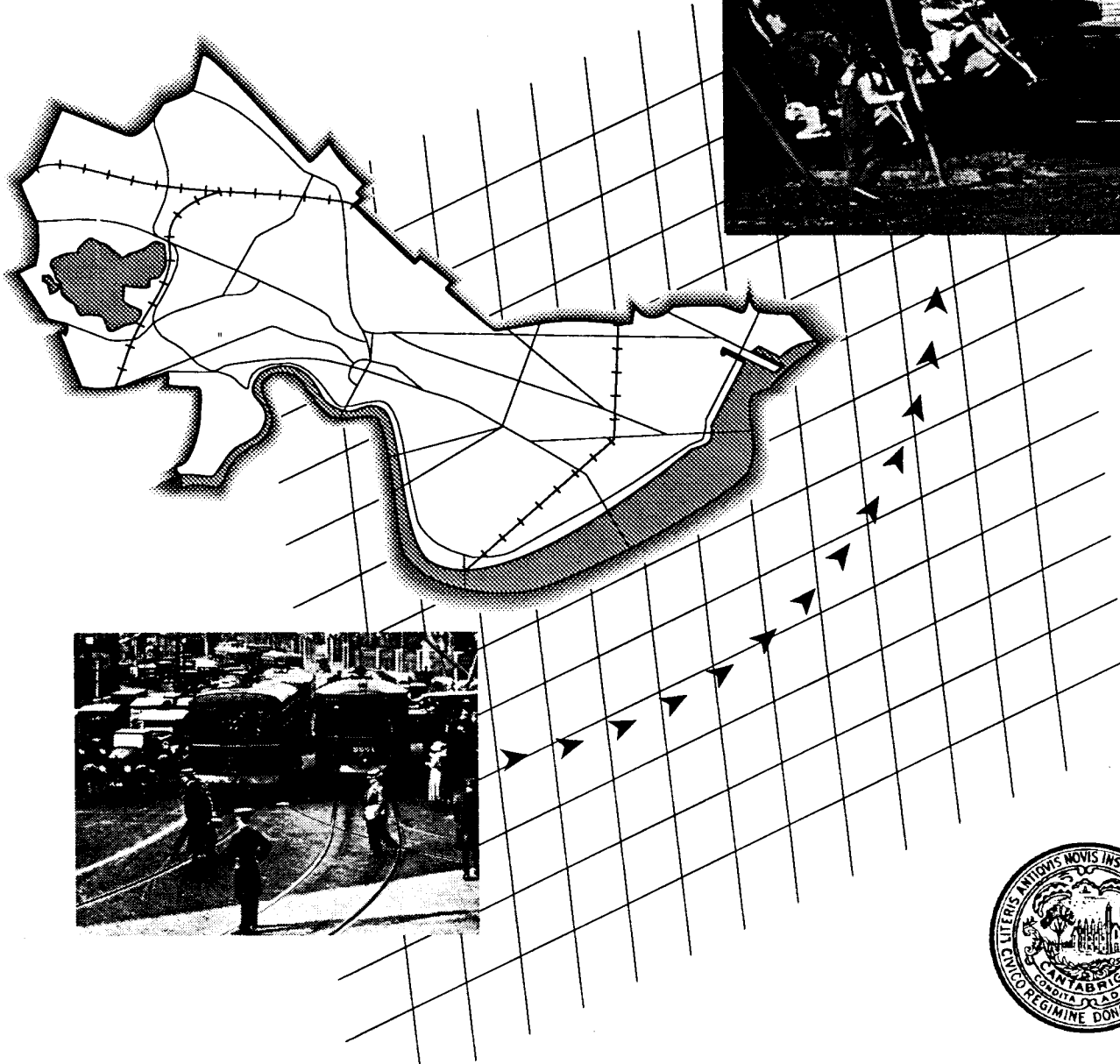


**DRAFT**

*Cambridge  
Growth Policy  
Document*

## **Toward a Sustainable Future**

Cambridge Planning Board &  
Community Development Department  
Cambridge, Massachusetts



**Toward a Sustainable Future**  
***Cambridge Growth Policy Document***

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**Cambridge City Council**

Mayor Kenneth Reeves  
Councillor Edward Cyr, Vice Mayor  
Councillor Francis Duehay  
Councillor Jonathan Myers  
Councillor Sheila Russell  
Councillor Walter Sullivan  
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Councillor William Walsh  
Councillor Alice Wolf

**Cambridge Planning Board**

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Final Draft  
23 February 1993

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Cambridge, Massachusetts**

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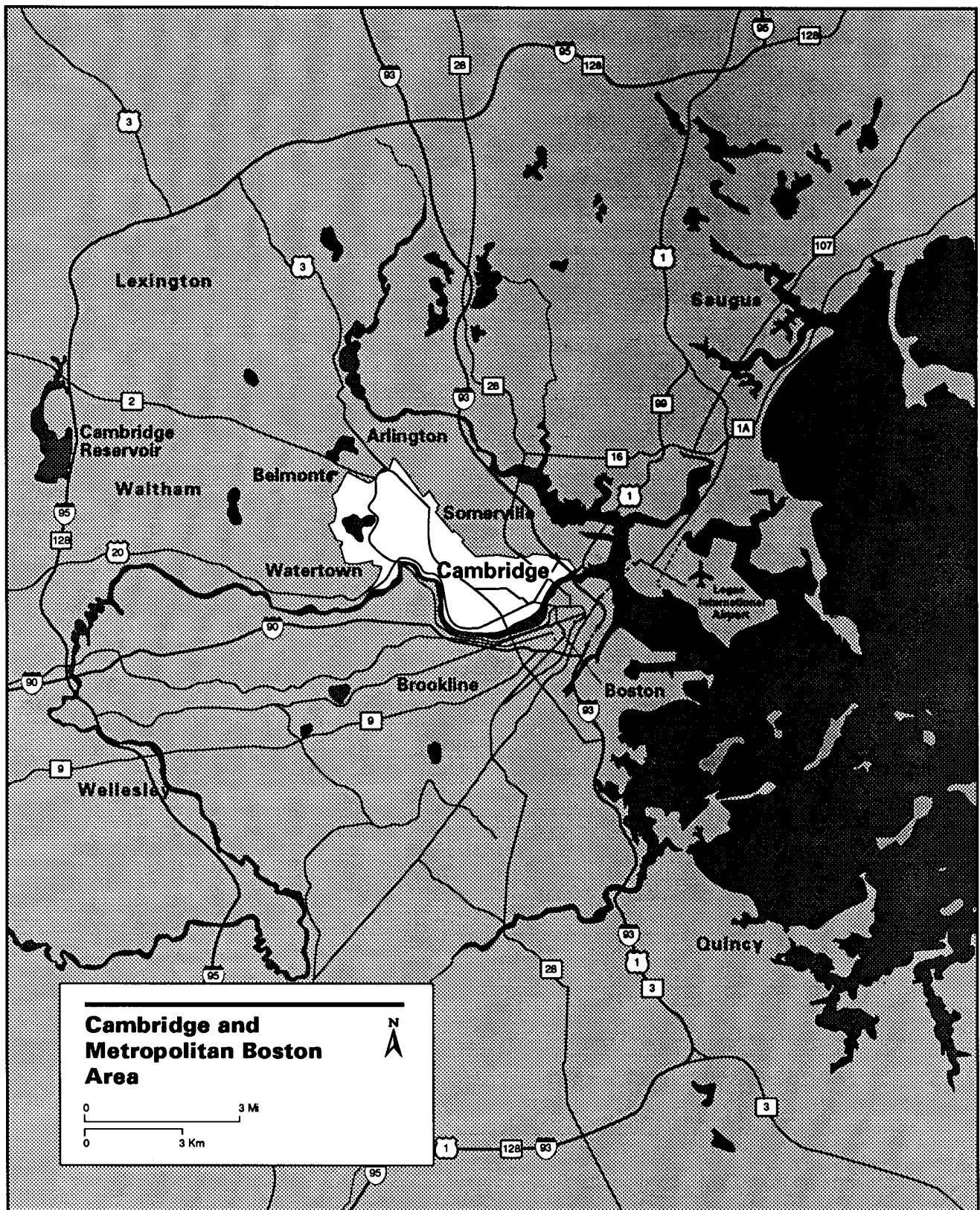
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Photography is principally the work of Elsa Campbell; additional photos by Claudia Thompson, Robin Shore, and Roger Boothe. Historical photos are courtesy of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

## Workshop Participants

The following is a list of individuals from the neighborhoods, the institutions and the business community who, through the Growth Policy workshops, participated in active discussion and review of the draft policies and provided extensive feedback to the Planning Board. The participants were not asked to reach consensus, nor were they expected to endorse the final recommendations made by the Planning Board. The inclusion of their names in this document recognizes their thoughtful and useful contributions to the Growth Policy process and is not intended to suggest agreement with or endorsement of all of the policies contained in this document.

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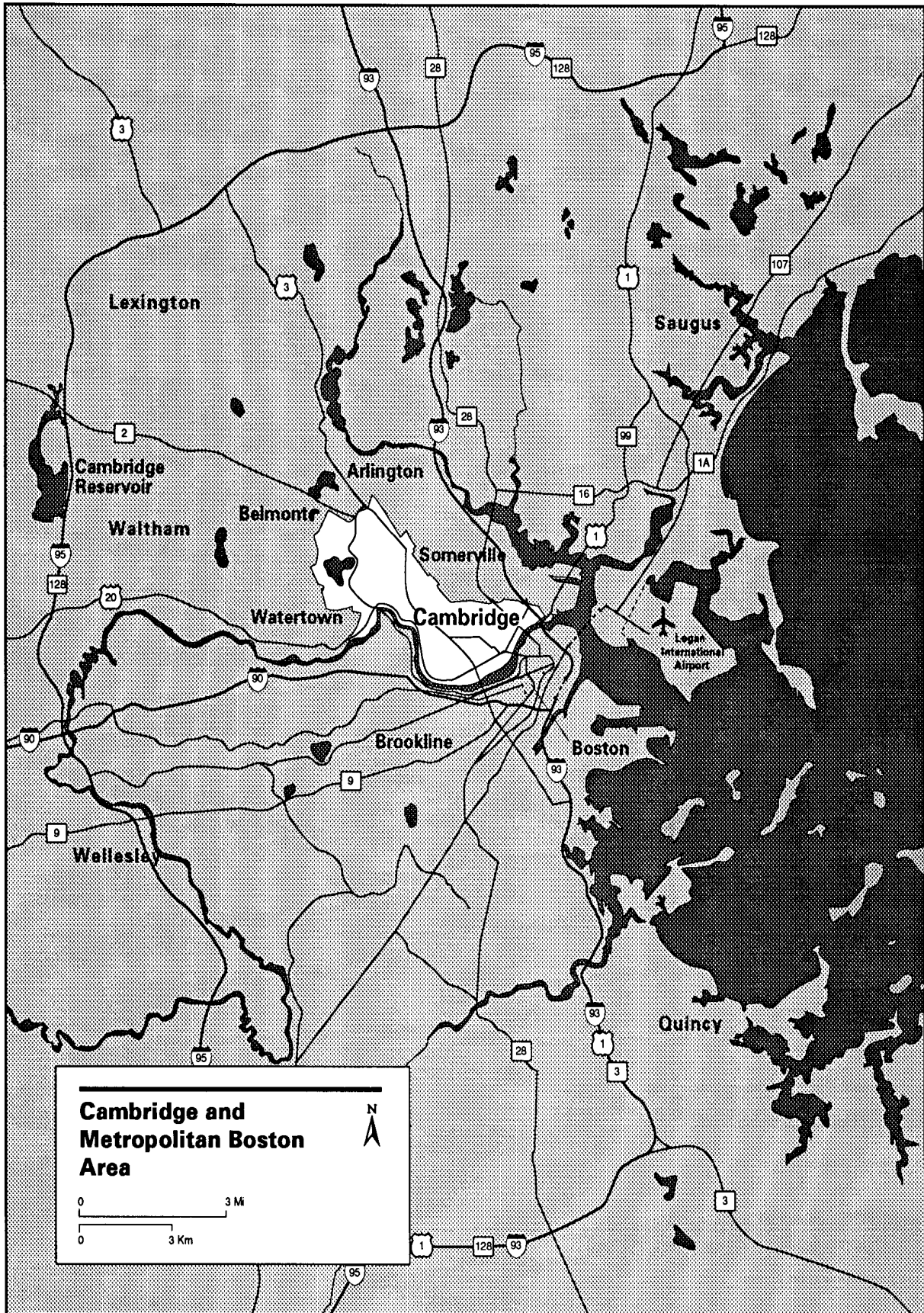
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A. MAPC's MetroPlan 2000

B. Background Data

C. Glossary







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## **Preface**

The underpinning for this look into Cambridge's future is the concept of sustainability, defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as *"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

The vision embodied in this document is conserving, respecting the past, while not suggesting that land uses in Cambridge remain frozen or static. It recognizes that some growth and change can be beneficial to the city. It builds on the recognition that Cambridge works and human diversity works. The current mix of urban form, scale, density and mix of uses is worth sustaining and enhancing, both in existing neighborhoods and commercial districts, and in the older industrial areas.

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## **Introduction**

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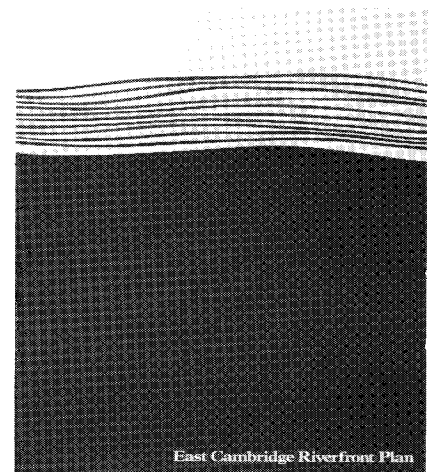
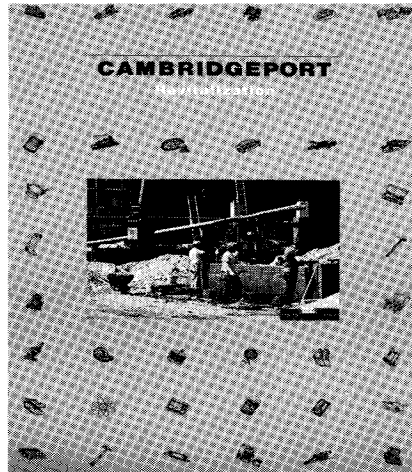
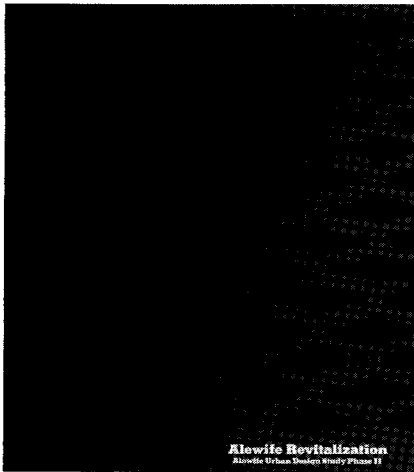
Cambridge is a dynamic, multi-faceted community that benefits greatly from the diversity of its citizenry and our interest in preserving and enhancing the city's unique quality of life. That diversity produces a wide range of opinion about what is important to our quality of life and has raised many questions about the future growth and development of the city. What makes our neighborhoods special? How can we maintain a vital economy? What uses are appropriate for the city's evolving industrial areas? How shall we protect our environment? What kind of community do we want Cambridge to be as we enter the next century?

These questions, and many others, have prompted much discussion of the city's physical planning and land use issues and the choices they raise. In response, the Community Development Department and the Planning Board have undertaken a comprehensive review of the land use and planning issues facing Cambridge in the 1990s. This document is the product of that review and articulates the Planning Board's vision and planning policies for the future of our city.

### **The Growth Policy Document and Process**

The Growth Policy document outlines the planning assumptions and policies guiding the physical planning of Cambridge. The Planning Board will use the document to help make clear, consistent and fair land use decisions. It is not a formula but a framework for decision-making, spotlighting the trade-offs necessary to meet a number of public goals. These include decent and affordable housing, a vibrant economy providing good jobs, an attractive built environment, plentiful and well-maintained open space and effective transportation networks which lessen dependence on the automobile.

The document grew out of discussions between the City Council, the Planning Board and the Community Development Department in the Spring of 1991. At that time, the Council's Subcommittees on Economic Development and the Environment asked the Department to prepare a document clearly articulating the City's growth and planning policies. Previous plans and ordinances addressed the needs of specific districts, offering urban design visions for former industrial areas such as East Cam-



*Plans for specific districts include the East Cambridge Riverfront Plan of 1978, the Alewife Revitalization Plan of 1980, and the Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan of 1983.*

bridge and Alewife, or detailed land use recommendations for residential neighborhoods, including North Cambridge. Other initiatives considered topics such as open space or commuting and transit use. While considerable progress was made in specific locations or topics, a more comprehensive, coordinated approach was needed to guide the Board's decisions and to ground planning efforts in a coherent, citywide vision.

A document setting out planning assumptions, proposed policies, supporting data and the history of recent land use decisions was subsequently drafted. Planning Board members and Community Development staff also outlined a process for involving the community in shaping the document. Aided by Cambridge College, the Board and staff developed a series of workshops attended by 40 participants. The latter included neighborhood residents, business people and officials from the city's institutions. The workshops, which convened in the Spring of 1992, engaged small groups of participants in active dialogue about a series of policy areas. Individual sessions focused on a specific topic area: land use, housing, urban design and open space, institutions, transportation, and economic development and employment. Participants' comments and ideas were incorporated into the draft document and submitted to the Planning Board for revision. The draft document was also submitted for public review and comment in a widely distributed newsletter in August 1992.

In September 1992, the discussants reconvened to focus more intensively on housing, economic development and institutions, and to place the policies in the context of fiscal limits and land use.

Subsequently, the Planning Board reviewed all comments and revised the policies accordingly. In February 1993, the Board held a public hearing to receive further comment. After final revisions, the document was transmitted to the City Council in March 1993. As general agreements on policies are established, the growth policies will be implemented through a broad range of planning and program initiatives.

### **Uses and Limitations of the Document**

While the growth policy document is meant to be comprehensive, it is not a master plan nor does it prescribe specific land uses or designs for specific sites. Nor can every policy be applied rigidly or simultaneously on every site. For instance, while more housing is advocated in formerly industrial areas, as well as job creation in new and growing industries, the document does not stipulate housing and job creation for every potential site. It proposes general policies which suggest that goals such as jobs and housing be considered and met in a systematic, coordinated way for the city as a whole. It aims to clarify the hard choices which must be made in specific instances, but does not attempt to resolve them in advance. It does, however, provide a framework within which these choices will be made.

The Growth Policy document is expected to aid city agencies and boards, including the Community Development Department, the city's planning agency. The Department will use the document as a guide, both in its work with the Planning Board and for creating and implementing plans. The document will not substitute for existing local rules such as the Zoning Ordinance, the Building Code or any other federal, state or municipal law but will potentially influence relevant changes to these overtime. While thus limited in scope, it is not a static document. The Board expects the growth policy document to be a dynamic policy instrument, evolving with annual reviews to consider citizen comments and Planning Board experience on specific issues and projects.

